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INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 2006
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0202
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1786
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2403
RUEHMT/AMCONSUL MONTREAL 0306
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC 1209
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 001070

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/28/2018

TAGS: PGOV PREL HA

SUBJECT: HAITI NEARING AGREEMENT ON NEXT GOVERNMENT THAT
WILL ALLOW PRIME MINISTER CONFIRMATION

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 1027

POR T AU PR 00001070 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Thomas C. Tighe. Reason: E.O. 12958
1.4 (b), (d)

Summary

¶1. (C) President Preval has offered senators who are demanding political party representation in the next government a formula for doing so. Initial indications are that the "Group of Nine" senators will agree to the proposal. If they do so in a meeting with President Preval scheduled for July 28, this agreement makes it more likely the Senate will confirm Prime Minister-designate Michele Pierre-Louis in the session now scheduled for July 29. End summary.

Group of Nine Demands Cabinet Posts for Parties

¶2. (C) Prime Minister-designate Michele Pierre-Louis invited Deputy SRSG Luis da Costa, MINUSTAH Deputy Director of Political Affairs Lizbeth Cullity, and PolCouns to a meeting July 25 to discuss her strategy for obtaining her parliamentary confirmation. She outlined the numerous meetings she and President Preval had held with political parties and groups in the Chamber of Deputies, especially the Cooperative of Progressive Parliamentarians (CPP), to obtain her July 17 confirmation in the lower house (reftel).

¶3. (C) The Senate was proving harder. A "Group of Nine" senators led by Yourie Latortue (L'Artibonite en Action) and Rudy Heriveaux (Fanmi Lavalas) had demanded that political parties be allowed to name cabinet ministers in the next government. Unless she and President Preval agreed to this, the senators would not vote to confirm Michele Pierre-Louis as Prime Minister. She and President Preval had balked at that demand, pointing out that parties in the Chamber of Deputies had effectively been superseded by two large blocs -- the majority bloc CPP and the smaller Union of Parliamentarians for the Development of Haiti (UPDN). Members in those blocs, which together encompass about

three-quarters of the deputies, acted largely independently of the political parties they represented. Party representatives in the outgoing Alexis government had often acted in a partisan fashion, to the detriment of government cohesion and the interests of their ministries. Furthermore, the CPP had not demanded inclusion of political parties or bloc representatives in the government as a condition for confirming Pierre-Louis. The President was concerned about making concessions to the Senate that the majority bloc in the Chamber might not accept. (Note: OPL and Fusion deputies abstained in that vote to press their demand that the next government be a "cohesive government" including representatives of the political parties. End note)

¶4. (C) Pierre-Louis noted that the Group of Nine had also demanded that she make a public declaration clarifying rumors of her homosexuality. She declared that she has already said all she will say on this issue. (Note: Pierre-Louis has made no public statement directly addressing this issue. We do not know what she has told parliamentarians. End note)

Preval Considers Compromise Formula

¶5. (C) Michele Pierre-Louis then revealed that she and the President were thinking of offering the Group of Nine a compromise: each political party in the parliament could submit several candidates for one or more ministries. Candidates would have to be experienced experts in their fields, not merely party activists. They must commit not to use their office in the political interest of their parties, and to respect government "cohesion." The President and she would choose the ministers from this list of nominees.

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Parties would not be offered "strategic" ministries (which she did not name), which would be reserved for her and the President alone. The President would meet separately with Senate President Kely Bastien and Senator Yourie Latortue July 26, possibly to discuss this offer.

Senators Initially Optimistic

¶6. (C) On July 27, Senator Latortue told PolCouns privately that in his meeting with President Preval the previous day, the President had offered each of the six political parties that have representatives in both chambers the right to submit several candidates for a single cabinet position. The nominees would have to be qualified and experienced in their field, and not simply be party activists. He had already obtained the agreement to this proposal from seven of the nine Senators in the Group of Nine, including Senator Rudy Heriveaux. He expected that Senator Edmonde Supplice Beauzile was the only Senator in this group who would continue to oppose Pierre-Louis' confirmation. The Group of Nine would meet with President Preval the afternoon of July 28 to finalize this agreement. (Note: Latortue confirmed the outlines of this proposal in a radio interview July 28. End note) Senator Heriveaux confirmed to PolCouns July 28 that he supports this compromise. He declared that once accepted by the Group of Nine, not only was Pierre-Louis' confirmation assured, but the vote of confidence in her government and general policy declaration was a mere "formality" and could happen in a matter of weeks. Neither senator made any mention of a Pierre-Louis statement clarifying her sexual orientation.

¶7. (C) Maryse Kedar, a close adviser to the PM-designate, confirmed to PolCouns July 27 the outline of the agreement. She was optimistic this would lead to a quick confirmation vote on July 29.

Comment: Possible Pitfalls Remain

¶8. (C) A key outstanding issue is which ministries the parties will be allowed to nominate candidates to fill. Senator Clerie told Polcouns early July 28 that this issue had not been decided. Confirming what Michele Pierre had told Polcouns earlier, Clerie said there were certain ministries -- including Foreign Affairs, Interior, Economy and Finance, and Justice -- that the President would never give to the political parties. Another issue is that only the Group of Nine senators, and not the political parties themselves, are concluding this deal. By negotiating only with the Senators, Preval does not necessarily have political party support for the deal he is offering. We expect some senators will vote the decision of their political parties, regardless of the Group of Nine position. Nevertheless, the chances for Senate confirmation of Michele Pierre-Louis now look much better than they did three days ago.

TIGHE